

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

2003

Deputy Fire Chief

Examination Orientation Guide



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I. Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Personnel has prepared this orientation guide for promotional candidates who will participate in the upcoming Deputy Fire Chief examination. The information in this booklet is designed to help candidates understand the testing process and answer some of their questions about how to prepare for the examination.

II. Description of the Examination

A. TEST DATE

Approximately two weeks before the test date, candidates will receive a notice in the mail that shows the date, time, location and room to which they should report for their examination. The oral assessment exercises are scheduled to begin in late-March 2003. Candidates are to bring the Notification Card, two forms of identification and two pencils to the Examination Center.

B. DESCRIPTION OF TEST FORMAT

An Assessment Center is an integrated system of exercises designed to generate behaviors similar to those required for success in a target job. These behaviors are measured in simulations that are similar to those activities performed in a given job. Each activity mirrors a different aspect of the job. Performance in these activities is observed by evaluators who are trained to be fair and objective. They compare participant's performance to predetermined performance guidelines to determine who will perform effectively in a particular job.

The New Jersey Department of Personnel, Division of Selection Services, uses a number of assessment center features in its Fire Promotional Assessment process. This methodology is known to be a reliable and valid predictor of job success. For practical reasons, fire departments cannot promote everyone who is eligible for advancement and then see how they perform before making a final selection decision. The next best approach, however, is to give eligible candidates a chance to try activities which closely resemble the target job.

A distinct examination has been developed for the title, Deputy Fire Chief. The examination will consist of four scenario-based oral exercises. Each scenario was developed to simulate tasks and assess knowledge, skills, and abilities that incumbents or supervisors of incumbents have deemed important to job performance.

C. TEST CONTENT AREAS

The scenario-based oral exercises will cover four topic areas:

1. Incident Command – Fire Incident
2. Incident Command – Non-fire Incident
3. Administration
4. Supervision

Sample assessment center exercises are located at the end of this guide, so that candidates may become familiar with some of the types of materials and response formats that they will encounter. The actual assessment center materials will be different from those presented in this guide. These scenarios are merely illustrative of the kinds of scenarios that may be encountered.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE LOGISTICS

The examination will be held at a central location. Candidates are advised to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time to ensure that all necessary administrative procedures can be conducted prior to the scheduled start time.

Candidates must bring the Notification Card, two forms of identification and two pencils to the Examination Center. Pens and highlighters are optional. One of the forms of identification must include a photograph. Candidates will not be permitted to bring this orientation guide into the Examination Center. Candidates should map out a route in advance of the examination date and plan to arrive at the Examination Center early because **no one will be admitted late.**

Most candidates will be sequestered either before they actually take the examination or right after they have taken it. This is done to eliminate interaction with other candidates who have already taken, or who are about to take, the examination.

Although the exact order of the exercises has not been finalized, it has been decided that the first and last exercises will be the two Incident Command exercises (Fire and Non-fire). Because there are two Incident Command exercises, candidates will have two periods of preparation time. Each preparation period will immediately precede the candidate's participation in each Incident Command exercise. At the beginning of the initial preparation period, candidates will be given the exam materials for the Administration and Supervision exercises. The duration of the initial preparation time will be approximately 55 minutes, the first 45 of which will be used to prepare for the Administration and Supervision exercises. To simulate the short duration of time that Deputy Chiefs have to prepare for an actual incident, candidates will not be given the test materials for the first Incident Command exercise until approximately 10 minutes remain in the initial preparation period. When the initial preparation period has ended, candidates will participate in the first Incident Command exercise. Next, candidates will participate in the Administration and Supervision exercises (again, the order of these two exercises has not yet been finalized). Finally, a second preparation period will be given to prepare for the last exercise, the second Incident Command exercise, prior to participation in the exercise. The duration of the second preparation period will be approximately 10 minutes. Candidates will not be given the exam materials for the second Incident Command exercise until the beginning of the second preparation period to simulate the short duration of time that Deputy Chiefs have to prepare for an actual incident.

Candidates will be permitted to take notes on the test materials or on paper provided during the preparation periods. They also may use the notes while participating in the actual exercises. Candidates should be aware, however, that any notes prepared or used during the exercises will not be considered by the assessors when making evaluations. In fact, such notes will be collected and secured following each exercise to ensure they are not accidentally exposed to candidates who have not yet participated in the assessment center.

Candidates will have approximately 10 minutes to respond to each exercise. Once candidates have completed all four exercises, they will be directed to the check out area where they will return all of their testing materials. Next, they will likely be directed to a sequestering room.

E. EXAMINATION SCORING

The scoring criteria have been determined, prior to the examination administration date, by a panel of Subject Matter Experts using generally accepted, fire command, fire fighting practices and reference materials. Scoring decisions involving courses of action that must be taken to resolve situations presented are based on Subject Matter Expert input. Only those oral responses that depict relevant behaviors that are observable and can be quantified will be assessed in the scoring process.

All candidates will be permitted to participate in each of the four oral exercises. The scores for each exercise will be standardized, weighted, and combined to formulate each candidate's overall examination score. Exercise weights for the overall examination score are 39.41% for the Incident Command – Fire Incident exercise, 31.00% for the Incident Command – Non-fire Incident exercise, 15.98% for the Administration exercise, and 13.61% for the Supervision exercise. The final score is a sum of the weighted, standardized, overall examination score plus the weighted, standardized, seniority score. The examination weights that are applied for the purpose of deriving the final score are 70% for the overall examination score and 30% for the seniority score. A more detailed description and explanation of the score calculation process will be provided to candidates during the formal examination review period. This review period is held sometime following the test administration.

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Unless otherwise stated in the scenario description, the following response levels and apparatus staffing will be standard for all scenarios throughout the examination.

RESPONSE LEVELS

Initial Response:	2 Engines 1 Ladder Truck 1 Battalion Chief
2nd Alarm:	2 Additional Engines 1 Additional Ladder 1 Battalion Chief

3rd Alarm: 2 Additional Engines
 1 Additional Ladder
 1 Battalion Chief

APPARATUS STAFFING

Engine: 1 First or Second Level Officer, 3 Firefighters
Ladder: 1 First or Second Level Officer, 3 Firefighters
EMS (Ambulance): 2 Emergency Medical Technicians

RESOURCES

Multi-channel radio capabilities
Immediate subordinate officers are Battalion Chiefs

III. Candidate Preparation

A. READING/ REFERENCE LIST

The following reference list has been selected for the Deputy Fire Chief exam:

1. **The Fire Chief's Handbook, 5th Edition (April 1995)**
 by Joseph R. Bachtler and Thomas F. Brennan
 Publisher: Fire Engineering Book Department (918) 835-3161
2. **Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics, 2nd Edition (March 1998)**
 by John Norman
 Publisher: Fire Engineering Book Department (918) 835-3161
3. **Safety and Survival on the Fireground (January 1992)**
 by Vincent Dunn
 Publisher: Fire Engineering Book Department (918) 835-3161
4. **Management in the Fire Service, 3rd Edition (June 1999)**
 by Harry R. Carter and Erwin Rausch
 Must Order Direct through Publisher: National Fire Protection Assn. (800) 344-3555
5. **Hazardous Materials: Managing the Incident, 2nd Edition (December 1995)**
 by Gregory G. Noll, Michael S. Hildebrand, and James G. Yvorra
 Publisher: International Fire Service Training Assn. (800) 654-4055
6. **Building Construction for the Fire Service, 3rd Edition**
 by Francis L. Brannigan, SFPE
 Publisher: National Fire Protection Assn. (800) 344-3555

Please note that the Department of Personnel intends to use the book list on a limited basis to develop test items. Justification for correct responses may be drawn from materials on the reading list and/or from the collective fire service experience of Subject Matter Experts. When justification is based on experience, care is taken to ensure that correct answers do not conflict

with the sources on the reading list. Although the DOP suggests that candidates review the reading/reference list, preparation for the examination should not be limited to the above reading/reference list. Since the test items will require open-ended responses, candidates also will have to rely on the application of knowledge and of administrative and supervisory principles.

B. HELPFUL HINTS

The purpose of the assessment center is to evaluate the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform important work-related tasks. Because we want to evaluate these characteristics as directly as possible, without having other factors such as “test wiseness” get in the way, we offer the suggestions below.

Skim Through All Exercise Materials at Least Once Before Starting to Prepare Responses -- Candidates should carefully read through the instructions and exercise materials before they start to prepare responses. Failure to do this may lead a candidate to respond based on partial information.

Underline or Make Notes About the Materials Received – Candidates will receive information concerning each scenario or problem. They should underline the issues that they think are important to ensure that they are addressed during the exercises.

Allocate Time Wisely – Candidates will need to plan out how much time they want to spend on each part of their presentation, or on the issues that they want to discuss and resolve. Candidates should wear a watch and keep track of their time so that they can cover all of the areas that they intend to cover. Test administration personnel will only tell candidates when to start and stop; they will not say how much time is left.

Approach the Problem or Situation Presented in the Test Calmly – Candidates should not panic if answers don't come to mind immediately. Candidates often think of additional answers or comments as the situation progresses.

Use Extra Time Wisely – Candidates may want to use any extra time to go back and clarify any of their responses/answers, and/or to summarize the key points addressed.

Best Effort – The exercises are designed to be difficult. Perfection is not expected. A candidate's overall evaluation is based on his/her performance on each exercise. Even if a candidate feels as though he/she did poorly on one particular exercise, the candidate should continue to try to do their best on the remaining exercises.

The Exercises Are Set In A Hypothetical Fire Department – This is done intentionally so as not to give an advantage to someone with a particular work background. Do not make assumptions about the hypothetical fire department or town. Candidates should take action and make decisions based only on the information that is given to them.

Tricks and Techniques - Developing strategies with regard to how to attack a problem is a good test taking technique, in that an organized approach is better than a disorganized approach or no approach at all. Such predetermined strategies are fine as a starting point but they cannot take

the place of true problem-solving skills or serve as a substitute for the critical thinking that is needed when responding to changing circumstances and demands, either in simulation exercises or in real-world events.

Some candidates are taught that certain exercises may lend themselves to the use of specific, test-taking “tricks.” Such tricks may consist of anything from techniques for organizing information, to statements and actions that should be done to get better scores. These “tricks and techniques” will only take a candidate so far. Keep in mind that tricks and techniques are NOT considered in the scoring criteria and, more importantly, tricks and techniques are poor substitutes for developing skills in supervision and management.

IV. Exam-Related Policies

A. EXAMINATION MAKE UP POLICY

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 4A: 4-2.9, makeup examinations for fire promotional examinations may be authorized only in cases of:

- Debilitating injury or illness requiring an extended convalescent period, provided the candidate submits a doctor’s certification containing a diagnosis and a statement clearly showing that the candidate’s physical condition precluded his or her participation in the examination;
- Death in the candidate’s immediate family as evidenced by a copy of the death certificate; or
- A candidate’s wedding which cannot be reasonably changed as evidenced by relevant documentation; or
- Error by the Department of Personnel or appointing authority.

If a makeup examination is required, the candidate should contact the Department of Personnel at (609) 292-9467 upon receipt of his/her Notification Card or, in cases of last minute illness, by supplying the relevant documentation within 5 days after the examination date.

Please note that all requests for medical makeup examinations must be accompanied by the Department of Personnel’s Medical Authorization for Make-Up Examination form. The treating physician must complete this form. The form can be obtained from the Department of Personnel [(609) 292-9467]. [NOTE: The above makeup policy is subject to change. If changed, candidates will be so notified.]

B. TEST SECURITY AND CANDIDATE PLEDGE

All candidates will be required to sign a pledge form at the examination center. The pledge states that (1) candidates will not discuss the content of this examination with any other person or

study group, (2) they understand the current examination may be administered over different days, and (3) they will not discuss this examination with any previously processed candidate or potential makeup candidate prior to the examination. No one is permitted to make copies or notes of any test materials.

Please note that candidates are NOT PERMITTED to bring any electronic communication or recording devices such as cellular phones, pagers, cassette/digital recording devices, laptops, etc., into a test center. Possession of any one of these prohibited devices inside of an examination center may result in disqualification. In addition, brief cases and other personal items must also be left outside of the test center. Upon release from the test center, candidates must quickly leave the premises so that other candidates (still involved in the testing and within earshot) will not be disturbed/distracted. Failure to obey the rules and instruction before, during, and after the examination may result in a candidate's disqualification from the examination.

C. POST EXAMINATION REVIEW POLICY

A detailed review policy will be provided at the test center. Candidates who participate in the oral assessment process will be provided the opportunity to review their test scores at some point following their receipt of an INELIGIBILITY/ELIGIBILITY NOTICE.

D. EXAMINATION CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event that circumstances require the postponement of the test, the Department of Personnel will contact the department heads of the jurisdictions for which the test is being held. In the case of inclement weather, candidates may call DOP's Information Center (609-292-4144) to find out the status of the examination or listen to their local radio station for further information.

V. Sample Test Exercises

A. INCIDENT COMMAND – FIRE INCIDENT

Assume that you are a newly promoted Deputy Fire Chief. It is 1400 hours on a weekday and the outside temperature is 36 degrees Fahrenheit. There has been a wind blowing in a southern direction, gusting to 30 mph. There is no precipitation. You are sitting at your desk reviewing paperwork when you receive an alarm. Two engine companies and a ladder company are dispatched to an old, one story, automobile dealership and service garage. Based on the nature and severity of the incident, you respond to the incident.

Engine 7 is the first to arrive on the scene and reports heavy black smoke toward the center of the building. Employees are exiting the building, yelling that an explosion has occurred and that the fire is in an area used for parts storage. The buildings dimensions are 350' by 80'. On Side "B" of the building there is a four-lane highway 20 feet from the building and on Side "D" there is an empty lot. On Side "C" of the building, there is a holding area for cars requiring service and a receiving area for newly delivered vehicles. Engine 7 advises that they are stretching a line to the rear of the building. You hear over the radio that Aerial 2 has just arrived and is positioning its aerial ladder at the front of the building and other arriving companies are beginning an aggressive search and interior attack. The officer of Aerial 2 reports that fire is showing from a

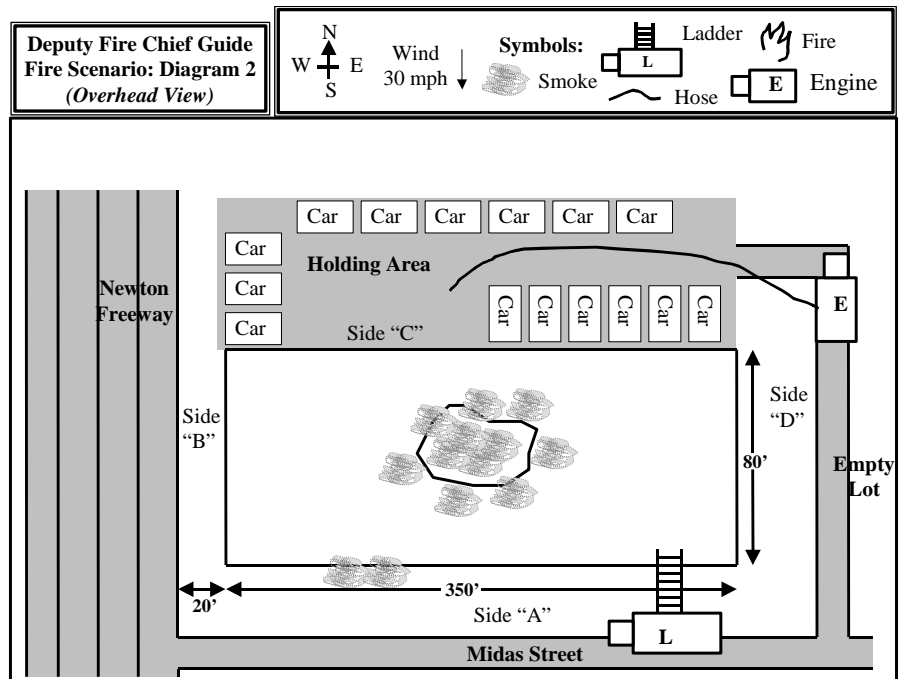
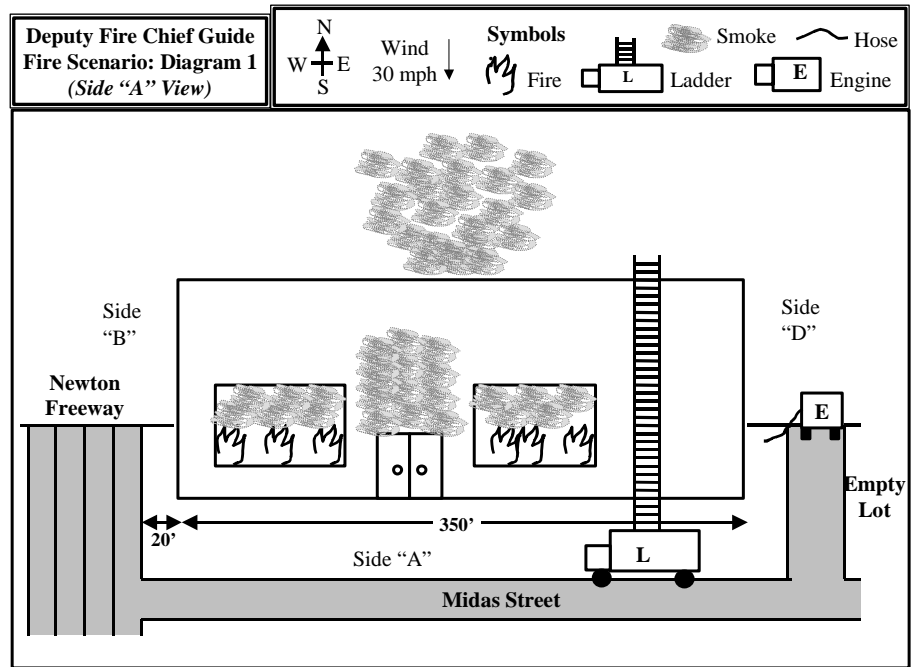
portion of the roof at the center of the building and also advises the companies on scene that initial reports indicate that propane tanks may have caused the reported explosion.

Just as you arrive at the scene, a second explosion occurs causing a partial collapse in the center of the building. Fire is now showing at the front of the building with heavy smoke exiting the front door. You advise the alarm office of the second explosion, collapse, and potential injuries to civilians and firefighters. Due to heavy radio traffic, you are unsure but think you may have heard calls for help from one or more companies that may be trapped as a result of the collapse. The water supply is adequate. The Chief is on vacation. Just as you are giving commands to your subordinates, you notice a news media van pull up at the scene.

Your task is to describe how you would respond to this incident. In describing your response, address the following:

1. **SIZE-UP**: What would your size-up consist of while en route to and upon arrival at the scene?
2. **TACTICS AND STRATEGIES**: What steps would you take to mitigate this incident?
3. **RESOURCE ALLOCATION**: How would you assign resources to achieve your tactical objectives?
4. **SAFETY**: What concerns might you have relative to the safety of your personnel and the general public?
5. **CONCLUSION**: Once the fire is under control, what steps would you take prior to leaving the fire scene?

Please note that you will have 10 minutes to present your response.



B. INCIDENT COMMAND – NON-FIRE INCIDENT

You are a newly promoted Deputy Fire Chief. It is 1500 hours on a weekday and the outside temperature is 72 degrees Fahrenheit. The wind is blowing to the east at 5 mph. There is no precipitation. You are sitting at your desk reviewing paperwork when you receive an alarm. Two engine companies and one ladder company are dispatched to a multiple vehicle accident at the intersection of Jamison Drive and Wheatley Avenue. One of the involved vehicles was reported to be a tanker truck. You recognize the fact that a large school is located nearby the intersection and the time indicates that the students will be dismissed shortly. Based on the nature and severity of the incident, you decide to respond.

Engine 14 is the first to respond and reports that a 5,000-gallon tanker is sitting in the middle of the intersection with a passenger car that crashed into it. The driver of the passenger car requires extrication, and the driver of the tanker is out of the vehicle. Another passenger car that swerved away from the accident struck a utility pole that fell and severed several electrical wires. There are two passengers trapped inside the second car.

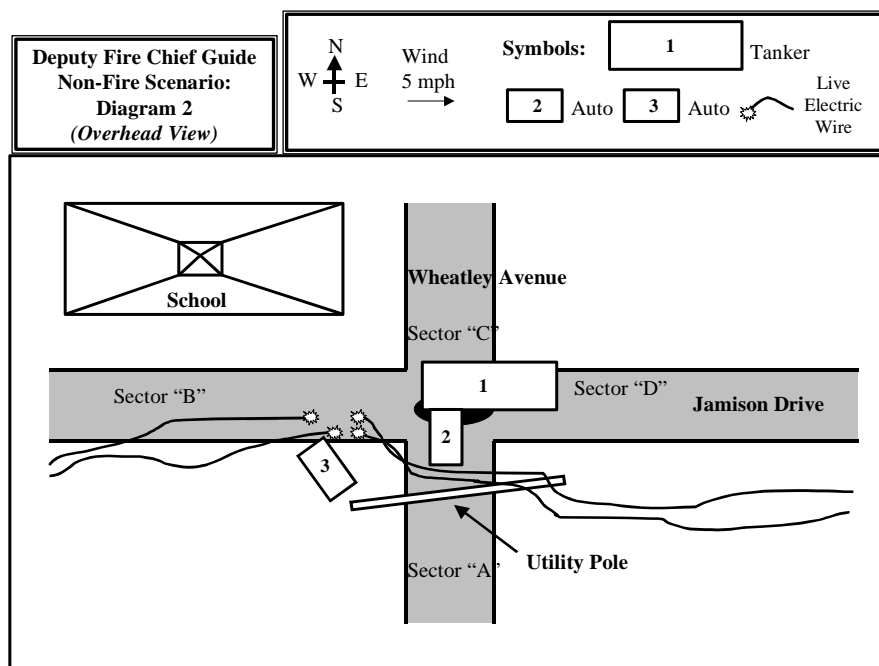
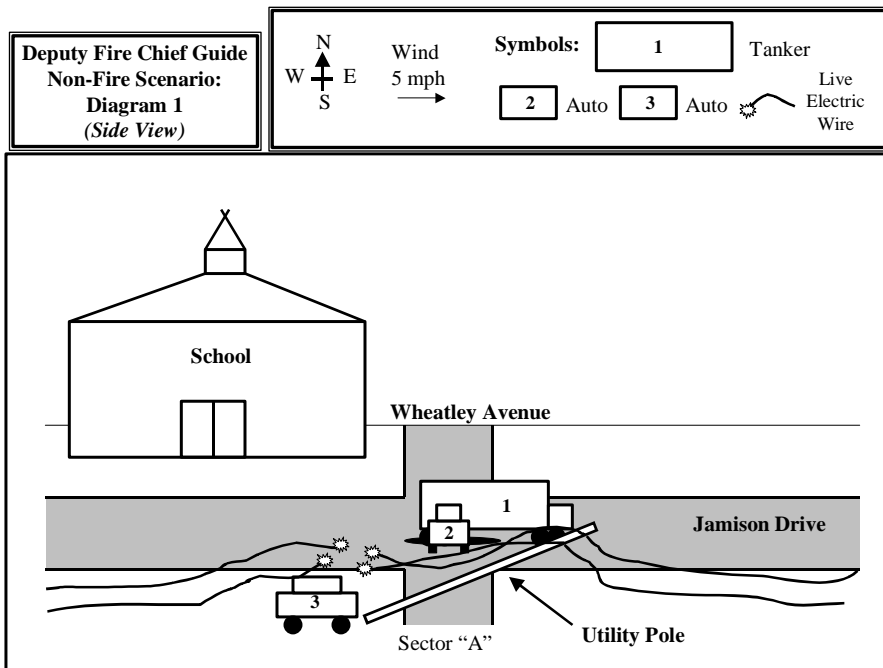
You arrive on scene and notice an unknown liquid leaking from the tanker. You see a placard with a red background on the tanker. There are live electrical wires on the ground nearby. You advise the alarm office of the situation and request a HAZMAT team.

At this point, the HAZMAT team is on its way to the scene. The Chief is on vacation. Just as you are giving commands to your subordinates, you notice students from the nearby school starting to gather near the scene.

Your task is to describe how you would respond to this incident. In describing your response, address the following:

1. **SIZE-UP**: What would your size-up consist of while en route to and upon arrival at the scene?
2. **TACTICS AND STRATEGIES**: What steps would you take to mitigate this incident?
3. **RESOURCE ALLOCATION**: How would you assign resources to achieve your tactical objectives?
4. **SAFETY**: What concerns might you have relative to the safety of your personnel and the general public?
5. **CONCLUSION**: Once the incident is under control, what steps would you take prior to leaving the fire scene?

Please note that you will have 10 minutes to present your response.



C. ADMINISTRATION

As a newly appointed Deputy Fire Chief of your department, you are involved in the basic steps of fire protection management. Your municipality has begun to undergo major revitalization. A new sports arena has recently been built, as well as new commercial and residential tracts. As part of the planning process, you need to establish the levels of service risk to the new development that meet the needs and expectations of the community and the Fire Department. You also need to identify the options and opportunities for controlling fire loss and cost within the public and private sectors, and to define the fire protection standards that can serve as management criteria. Based on your own experience and in accordance with the text, Management in the Fire Service, 3rd Edition, identify the primary or fundamental planning activities and how they apply to this current situation.

D. SUPERVISION

You have recently been appointed Deputy Fire Chief of the Department. Three Fire Captains come to your office and tell you that the Battalion Fire Chief is not performing up to departmental standards. Specifically, they claim that his actions on the emergency scene are in direct contrast to accepted safety standards. On some incidents he uses the ICS and on others he does not. He is taking leave from the job on a more frequent basis than he has in the past. He calls for more help than is needed on minor incidents and he underestimates the resources needed for major emergencies. He never requests that a Deputy Fire Chief respond to major incidents. They feel that their shift has become the laughing stock of the department. In accordance with the text, Management in the Fire Service, 3rd Edition, what questions would you ask to determine the Battalion Chief's competency level as a supervisor? In addition, use your experience and knowledge to explain how you would resolve this problem.